

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL EILDON AREA FORUM

MINUTE of Meeting of the EILDON AREA FORUM held in the Waverley Chambers, Transport Interchange, Galashiels, on Thursday, 8 September, 2016 at 6.30 pm

- Present:- Councillors B White (Chairman), S. Aitchison (from para 2.2), M Ballantyne, G Edgar, I. Gillespie (from para 2.3), B Herd, J G Mitchell.
Community Council representatives:- R Kenney (Galashiels), T Cotter (Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem), J McLaren, Employee Director (NHS Borders).
- Apologies:- Councillors V. M. Davidson, D. Parker and J. Torrance; Inspector M Bennett (Police Scotland), K Langley (Scottish Fire & Rescue Service), Stow Community Council.
- In Attendance:- Neighbourhood Area Manager (C Blackie), Democratic Services Officer (F Walling).
- One member of public.

1. **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Forum was not quorate until paragraph 2.3 of the Minute as there was not an elected Member present from each Ward at the beginning of the meeting. The Chairman therefore varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

2. **PRESENTATIONS**

2.1 **Raising concerns about alcohol in your community**

Licensing Standards Officer, Mike Wynne, and Senior Development Officer, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Susan Walker, were in attendance to give a presentation on behalf of the Scottish Borders Licensing Forum. The presentation was in support of the publication of the Toolkit Resource for communities, copies of which were provided at the meeting. The toolkit was designed to help anyone who would like to have a say on how alcohol impacted on their community. It explained how the licensing process worked in Scotland and provided some practical tips to help people who wanted to get involved. In response to the question 'Why is alcohol licensed?' Mr Wynne advised that due to the harm associated with the product, alcohol was deemed a high risk product and therefore subject to regulation. The licensing system existed to regulate the sale of alcohol to minimise harm. There were three types of alcohol license: permanent (premises); temporary (occasional); and personal in respect of managers/supervisors that managed the sale of alcohol. The Licensing Board was made up of 10 elected Councillors but also involved in the process of deciding who could sell alcohol were the Licensing Standards Officers, Police, Health Board, Community Councils, Local Licensing Forum and members of the Community. The presentation went on to summarise the licensing application process and how Community Councils could raise concerns, if they wished, about alcohol in the community. Community Councils could report problems to the Police or Licensing Standards Officer; input to the planning process; get involved with the Local Licensing Forum; comment on alcohol licence applications; and speak to their local Councillor. Further details and advice about how to raise concerns were outlined in the toolkit booklet. Parties putting in an objection or representations in respect of an application would be invited by the Licensing Board to attend the hearing at which the license would be considered. For reference Ms Walker drew attention to the Alcohol Profile 2014/15,

copies of which were also available at the meeting. This was the third report by the Local Licensing Forum which aimed to collectively present information relating to evidence of alcohol-related harm in the Scottish Borders based on national research as well as local data from Police Scotland, NHS Borders, Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Mr Wynne and Ms Walker concluded the presentation by answering questions from those present.

MEMBER

Councillor Aitchison joined the meeting.

2.2 Earlston Locality Learning and Youth Work Partnerships

In attendance to give a presentation about the work of the Earlston Learning Community Partnership was Susan Law, Earlston Voluntary Sector Manager. Handouts relating to the presentation and a profile of the Earlston Learning Community were provided at the meeting in addition to a sheet summarising Voluntary Youth Services in the Earlston catchment area. It was explained that there were currently 2,328 young people in the Earlston catchment area with a High School roll of approximately 1050. The figures for deprivation in Earlston were relatively low. However geographical access was a major contributing factor to lack of youth opportunities. Youth Work Development involved partnership working with schools and other local and borders-wide organisations to bring more opportunities to young people to tackle issues such as young carers, mental health and drug and alcohol misuse. Aims were to increase and support youth services in the eight towns and villages within the Earlston catchment; give direction to the part time Development Worker and newly appointed sessional staff; submit, monitor and review funding applications for salary, core costs and service development; provide educational and recreational opportunities for all young people; and to look at the long term development of the organisation to make it sustainable into the future. Ms Law highlighted work being carried out in relation to the priorities identified: Education, with a focus on the number of people 16+ years with few or no qualifications; the cost of and access to transport which affected access for young people to extra-curricular activities and work experience; and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and support for mental health issues. With regard to staffing of the services, the manager was contracted for 21 hours per week. A grant of £10k, received from the Moffatt Trust, was being used to pay for the present sessional youth worker and youth work opportunities were supported by 14 adult volunteers. Funding was in place until December 2017 for the manager's post but the organisation was continually looking for funding for project costs and sessional staff. Every pound received from Scottish Borders Council had been matched with £3 from other sources. New board members were required as a matter of urgency. Members indicated their keen interest in the issues raised in the presentation. In particular they discussed the need for a specific community space, for young people to go, in Earlston and it was understood that the Earlston Community Development Trust may also be exploring this issue. It was noted that, when asked for their views, having a place to get together outside school was the main priority for young people. Councillor Aitchison offered to follow up this issue with officers within the Council's Education section.

MEMBER

Councillor Gillespie joined the meeting.

2.3 Galashiels Hydropower Project

A presentation on the Galashiels Hydropower Project was given by Hans Waltl. Also present was Stan Johnston to give further information about the water engine technology involved. The project aimed to unlock the potential and to revive the caulds and mill lades of the Gala Water as an energy source for Galashiels. In his introduction Mr Waltl referred to the history of the Gala Water and its mill lades in providing power for industry and around which the town of Galashiels was developed. A timeline was shown starting in 1699 when the first town lade was developed and a map and photographs illustrated the water infrastructure as it now appeared. There were many types of water engineering technology available but a key challenge was the relatively low water head heights of the

waterways in Galashiels. It was proposed to use innovative hydro generation technology 'the Water Engine' as a solution to capture the energy potential in these cases. The proposed string of sites were indicated on a plan of the Gala Water and lades. The aim was to provide power to nearby premises with an estimate of 3GWh production which would meet 20% of domestic demand. It was pointed out that the project could provide a demonstrator that, if successful, may be applicable to many other waterways across the Borders and Scotland. Mr Johnston explained that the Water Engine used a system of floats which were raised and lowered by water engineering. A system of hydraulic rams was used to convert this motion into high pressure fluid which could be used in numerous ways including for hydro-electricity. The project would be managed by two community-owned companies which would also be run for community benefit. One, which would be grant funded, would work to restore the lades and caulds and the other would be concerned with the generating equipment. The companies would work in partnership with Scottish Borders Council, SEPA, River Tweed Commission, Tweed Forum, Borders College, Scottish Borders Housing Association and Energise Galashiels. In the ensuing discussion Members recognised this as an innovative and fascinating project with exciting potential for Galashiels. In response to questions about financial plans relating to capital investment and the issue of shares, Mr Waltl advised that the intention was to publish a prospectus early in November.

- 2.4 The Chairman thanked those attending who had given the interesting and informative presentations and in view of the disappointing Community Council representation at the Area Forum asked for copies of the presentations to be circulated to all Community Councils following the meeting.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the presentations.**
- (b) **AGREED that copies of the presentations be circulated for information to Community Councils.**

MEMBER

Councillor Edgar left the meeting.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD SMALL SCHEMES AND QUALITY OF LIFE FUND

Neighbourhood Area Manager, Craig Blackie, gave a verbal update on the progress of schemes and projects under the Small Schemes and Quality of Life budgets. It was noted that details continued to be circulated to Members for approval by email. Mr Blackie also gave an update about the work of the environmental wardens who were introduced from the end of May 2016 to specifically address litter and dog fouling issues. A total of 31 fixed penalty notices had been issued in the area, two of which were for dog fouling and the remainder for litter. Apprehension of dog fouling incidents was mainly intelligence-led and Mr Blackie pleaded for information about habitual offenders to be passed to him via the Council website. He stressed that the environmental wardens were being employed as part of a year's trial following which a report would go back to Council on how effective they had been. Although it was not currently the Council's policy to advertise where, in the Borders, the wardens would be operating Members believed that it would be effective to release advanced information about where they were patrolling to raise awareness and reduce dog fouling and litter offences.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

4. PARTNER UPDATES

4.1 NHS Borders

Employee Director John McLaren gave a verbal update. He reported that a recent NHS Borders Annual Review had been well attended. The main issue for discussion at the

Annual Review and at the Integrated Joint Board meetings was the financial challenge facing the services in the forthcoming year and beyond. In this respect, Mr McLaren confirmed that he would keep the Area Forum informed of any issues which involved public engagement. He concluded his update with confirmation that WiFi would be available in the dining area and in some wards at the Borders General Hospital from early September.

4.2 **Police Scotland**

Inspector Mike Bennett was unable to attend the meeting but his report had been circulated and he asked that any issues raised be passed on to him. In an introduction, the report advised that a new Divisional Commander had been appointed for the Lothians and Scottish Borders area. Chief Superintendent Ivor Marshall took up his role on 18 May 2016 and said "It is a pleasure and a privilege to have been appointed as the Police Commander for The Lothians and Scottish Borders – my local division. Building upon all the good work of my predecessors and drawing upon the ongoing commitment and hard work of all officers and staff, I am confident that the Division will deliver positive outcomes in keeping with agreed local plans. We will be relentless in our prevention and detection of crime, we will be resolute in protecting citizens from harm, and we will be proactive in promoting the wellbeing of everyone who lives in or visits the Lothians and Scottish Borders. Having the support of local communities is vitally important to our work so we will ensure that our values of integrity, fairness and respect sit at the heart of all that we do so that we maintain the trust and confidence of the people we serve." The report went on to give details of the focus of police work in the Multi Member Ward areas of Galashiels and District, Selkirkshire and Leaderdale and Melrose. With regard to the Local Festivals, police had been involved with committees in the organisation and delivery of the local common ridings and festivals. This year's events had been a great success with very little in the way of disorder. This was due largely to the good communication and planning that went into these events, most of which the public were not aware of. Police Scotland would like to thank the organisers for working in partnership to deliver these events. The report concluded with a reminder that Police Scotland's public consultation process was online and would be open all year. The consultation, which would be a completely transparent process, would shape the way that policing was coordinated across Scotland and in local communities.

4.3 **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**

Station Manager, Keith Langley, had circulated his report but sent apologies for his absence. The report summarised response and resilience activity in the Eildon Area since the last Area Forum meeting. Fire prevention and protection activity continued to be key to reducing the number of fires, casualties and losses, thus minimising the economic and social impact of fire on communities. The report drew attention to activity ongoing within the Eildon Area. One of these, the TD1 Initiative, involved a one-day a week, six-week course over the school holidays. During the pilot, fire fighters were paired with TD1 candidates working on the Bronze Youth Initiative. The syllabus included team building, health and well-being, CPR, consequence of fire, developing employability etc. All candidates achieved the Bronze Youth Initiative award. Moving into the Autumn, the seasonal community safety calendar and thematic action plan would focus activities on older and vulnerable persons; bonfire safety; student safety; and electrical and chimney safety. The Local Authority Liaison Officer was in post within Council Headquarters in order to continue to improve partnership working. The primary aims of this activity were to help ensure the safety and welfare of vulnerable persons and to seek to reduce the overall numbers of accidental dwelling fires, fire casualties and fire fatalities in homes.

DECISION

NOTED the updates.

5. **COMMUNITY COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT**

Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk and Midlem Community Councillor, Tom Cotter, gave information about a coffee morning being held in Midlem Village Hall on 24 September from 10 am – 12 pm,

at which a Pensions Adviser from the Citizens Advice Bureau would be in attendance to give advice.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

6. OPEN QUESTIONS

There were no open questions.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

7. MINUTE

7.1 There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 12 May 2016.

**DECISION
APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.**

7.2 With regard to paragraph 2.2 of the Minute, Councillor Aitchison gave some clarification about consultation in relation to the review of the school estate provision and to rural schools in particular. Views had been put forward in the pre-consultation that the Council should engage with communities at an early stage when school rolls were dropping, to look at what sustainability actions could be taken. Letters would therefore be sent shortly to parents and guardians of pupils in those schools with rolls of less than 50 to explain how this would be taken forward.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following would be on the agenda of the next meeting:-

- (a) Community Empowerment Bill
- (b) TD1 Youth Hub Exhibition 'Youth Poverty and Homelessness'

The Chairman expressed his disappointment at the low turnout of Community Council representatives and advised of his intention to contact Community Councils prior to the next meeting to encourage better attendance.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 8 December 2016 at 6.30 pm at the Transport Interchange, Galashiels.

The meeting concluded at 8.35 pm